



# Dorset Police and Crime Panel

Working for our Communities

Scrutinising & Supporting the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

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Chairman: Mike Short MBE

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Martyn Underhill  
Police and Crime Commissioner

28 September 2018

*Dear Martyn,*

1. Thank you for your informative presentation to the Dorset Police and Crime Panel (PCP) yesterday regarding your decision about the proposed Police Merger between Dorset, Devon & Cornwall. It was also extremely useful that Acting Chief Constable James Vaughan, a key decision maker in this process, was present. You both provided a rounded view of the rationale, rigour and evidence that had been applied in arriving at your respective decisions.
2. To enable the PCP to scrutinise the PCC's decision-making process, the following Key Lines of Enquiry (KLoE) were agreed and submitted to the Dorset OPCC<sup>1</sup> to assist in an objective evaluation and assessment of the merger proposal:
  - Does the merger proposal have a clear economic basis?<sup>2</sup>
  - Will the merger improve the efficiency of the police?
  - Will the merger improve the effectiveness of policing in the area?
  - Will the merger have an impact on public safety?
  - Does the proposal have sufficient local support?
3. Alongside the above, the PCP had also asked for assurance on the following aspects:
  - Adherence to the merger process and its effective management.
  - How, due to the merger, the public will continue to have an effective voice/scrutiny on policing in Dorset?<sup>3</sup>
4. After a thorough, insightful and mature debate the PCP formally resolved that it:
  - **Agrees that the Police and Crime Commissioner's decision has followed appropriate procedure and is supported by evidence.**
5. On being put to the vote, this resolution was supported by the vast majority of Panel members, with one abstention.
  - Two specific reasons have subsequently been provided by the Panel Member who recorded their abstention, these are:
    - "Bournemouth was given no opportunity to give an opinion on the intended Merger. (No Officers, the leader, or the Councillors of the Borough Council were consulted.)"

<sup>1</sup> Dorset PCP DPCP/01/03/DO dated 08 July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Including a clear and viable path for precept equalisation.

<sup>3</sup> Which covers a large geographical area from The Isles of Scilly to Land's End to Christchurch - under one PCC.

- "The Business Case was in the public domain, yet not presented to the panel at all prior to them being asked to scrutinise the Commissioners decision, regarding the anticipated Merger. (*Devon and Cornwall PCP was going to see their Merger business plan before they voted on the Devon and Cornwall's Commissioners' actions.*)"

6. The PCP had one concern that it wished to place on record - public representation following the Merger:

- The panel seeks assurance that policy methodology for public access to the merged force Police and Crime Commissioner is entrenched in the representation that goes forward to the Home Office.

7. In order to meet the specific consultation requirements and responsibilities placed upon us by the Home Office as part of this process, the PCP also confirmed that, from the evidence presented, it has '*No Clear Objection*'. The PCP would be grateful for an update on the formal outcome of your further discussions.

8. Finally, the Dorset PCP would be grateful if you would pass on our sincere thanks to your team and the Acting Chief Constable's colleagues for all of their time and hard work in driving this process forward.

Yours sincerely,

*Mike Short*

M J SHORT MBE  
Chairman  
Dorset Police and Crime Panel

Copy to:

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Clerk to the Panel – Jonathan Mair  
OPCC Chief Executive - Simon Bullock  
DCC - Mr Mark Taylor